

cloture vote at 11 a.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, at 11 a.m. tomorrow, the Senate will vote on cloture on the committee substitute to the antitrafficking bill. If cloture is not invoked, there will be a second immediate vote on cloture on the underlying bill.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator COTTON for up to 45 minutes and Senator BROWN for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arkansas.

AMERICA'S MILITARY STRENGTH

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I speak for the first time from the Senate floor with a simple message: The world is growing ever more dangerous and our defense spending is wholly inadequate to confront the danger. To be exact:

During the last four or five years the world has grown gravely darker. . . . We have steadily disarmed, partly with a sincere desire to give a lead to other countries, and partly through the severe financial pressure of the time. But a change must now be made. We must not continue longer on a course in which we alone are growing weaker while every other nation is growing stronger.

I wish I could take credit for those eloquent and ominous words, but I cannot. Winston Churchill sounded that warning in 1933, as Adolph Hitler had taken power in Germany.

Tragically, Great Britain and the West did not heed this warning when they might have strangled that monster in his crib.

Rather than let the locusts continue to eat away at the common defense, the Axis Powers were stronger and the West weaker, conciliating with and appeasing them, hoping their appetite for conquest and death might be sated. As we all know, however, that appetite only grew until it launched the most terrible war in human history.

Today, perhaps more tragically because we ought to benefit from those lessons of history, the United States is again engaged in something of a grand experiment of the kind we saw in the 1930s. As then, military strength is seen in many quarters as a cause of military adventurism. Strength and confidence in the defense of our interests, alliances, and liberties is not seen to deter aggression but to provoke it.

Rather than confront our adversaries, our President apologizes for our supposed transgressions. The administration is harsh and unyielding to our friends, soothing and suffocating to our enemies. The President minimizes the threat we confront, in the face of territory seized, weapons of mass destruction used and proliferated, and innocents murdered.

The concrete expression of this experiment is our collapsing defense budget. For years, we have systematically underfunded our military, marrying this philosophy of retreat with a misplaced understanding of our larger budgetary burdens. We have strained our fighting forces today to the breaking point, even as we have eaten away at our investments in future forces, creating our own "locust years," as Churchill would have put it. Meanwhile, our long-term debt crisis looks hardly any better, even as we ask our troops to shoulder the burden of deficit reduction, rather than shoulder the arms necessary to keep the peace.

The results of this experiment, it should come as no surprise, are little different from the results from the same experiment in the 1930s. American weakness and leading from behind have produced nothing but a more dangerous world. When we take stock of that world and our position in it, there can be no doubt a change must now be made.

An alarm should be sounding in our ears. Our enemies, sensing weakness and hence opportunity, have become steadily more aggressive. Our allies, uncertain of our commitment and capability, have begun to conclude that they must look out for themselves, even where it is unhelpful to stability and order. Our military, suffering from years of neglect, has seen its relative strength decline to historic levels.

Let's start with the enemy who attacked us on September 11: radical Islamists. During his last campaign, the President was fond of saying Al Qaeda was "on the run." In a fashion, I suppose this was true. Al Qaeda was and is running wild around the world, now in control of more territory than ever before. This global network of Islamic jihadists continues to plot attacks against America and the West. They sow the seeds of conflict in failed states and maintain active affiliates throughout Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Greater Middle East, and South Asia.

Further, Al Qaeda in Iraq was let off the mat when the President disregarded its commanders' best military judgment and withdrew all troops from Iraq in 2011. Given a chance to regroup, it morphed into the Islamic State, which now controls much of Syria and Iraq. The Islamic State cuts the heads off of Americans, burns alive hostages from allied countries, executes Christians, and enslaves women and girls. The Islamic State aspires and actively plots to attack us here at home, whether by foreign plots or by recruiting a lone wolf in our midst.

The President's suggestions, in other words, that the war on terror is over or ending, are far from true. Indeed, the Director of National Intelligence recently testified that "when the final accounting is done, 2014 will have been the most lethal year for global terrorism in the 45 years such data has been compiled." Yet the President will not even speak our enemy's name.

The threat of radical Islamic terrorism brings us to Iran, the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism. My objections to the ongoing nuclear negotiations are well known and need not be rehearsed at length here. I will simply note that the deal foreshadowed by the President, allowing Iran to have uranium enrichment capabilities and accepting an expiration date on any agreement—to quote Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—"doesn't block Iran's path to the bomb; it paves Iran's path to the bomb." If you think, as I do, the Islamic State is dangerous, a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic is even more so.

Recall, after all, what Iran already does without the bomb. Iran is an outlaw regime that has been killing Americans for 35 years, from Lebanon to Saudi Arabia, to Iraq. Unsurprisingly, Iran is only growing bolder and more aggressive as America retreats from the Middle East. Ayatollah Khamenei continues to call for Israel's elimination. Iranian-backed Shiite militias now control much of Iraq, led by Qassem Suleimani, the commander of the Quds Force, a man with the blood of hundreds of American soldiers on his hands.

Iran continues to prop up Bashar al-Assad's outlaw regime in Syria. Iranian-aligned Shiite militants recently seized Sana'a, the capital of Yemen. Hezbollah remains Iran's cat's paw in Lebanon. Put simply, Iran dominates or controls five capitals in its drive for regional hegemony. Moreover, Iran has rapidly increased the size and capability of its ballistic missile arsenal, recently launching new a satellite. Just 2 weeks ago, Iran blew up a mock U.S. aircraft carrier in naval exercises and publicized it with great fanfare.

Iran does all of these things without the bomb. Just imagine what it will do with the bomb. Imagine the United States further down the road of appeasement, largely defenseless against this tyranny.

You do not have to imagine much, though; simply look to North Korea. Because of a naive and failed nuclear agreement, that outlaw state acquired nuclear weapons. Now America is largely handcuffed, watching as this rogue regime builds more bombs and missiles capable of striking the U.S. homeland and endangering our allies.

But perhaps an even more obvious result of this experiment with retreat is the resurgence of Russia. The President aspired for a reset with Russia and made one-sided concessions such as withdrawing ballistic missile defenses from Poland and the Czech Republic.